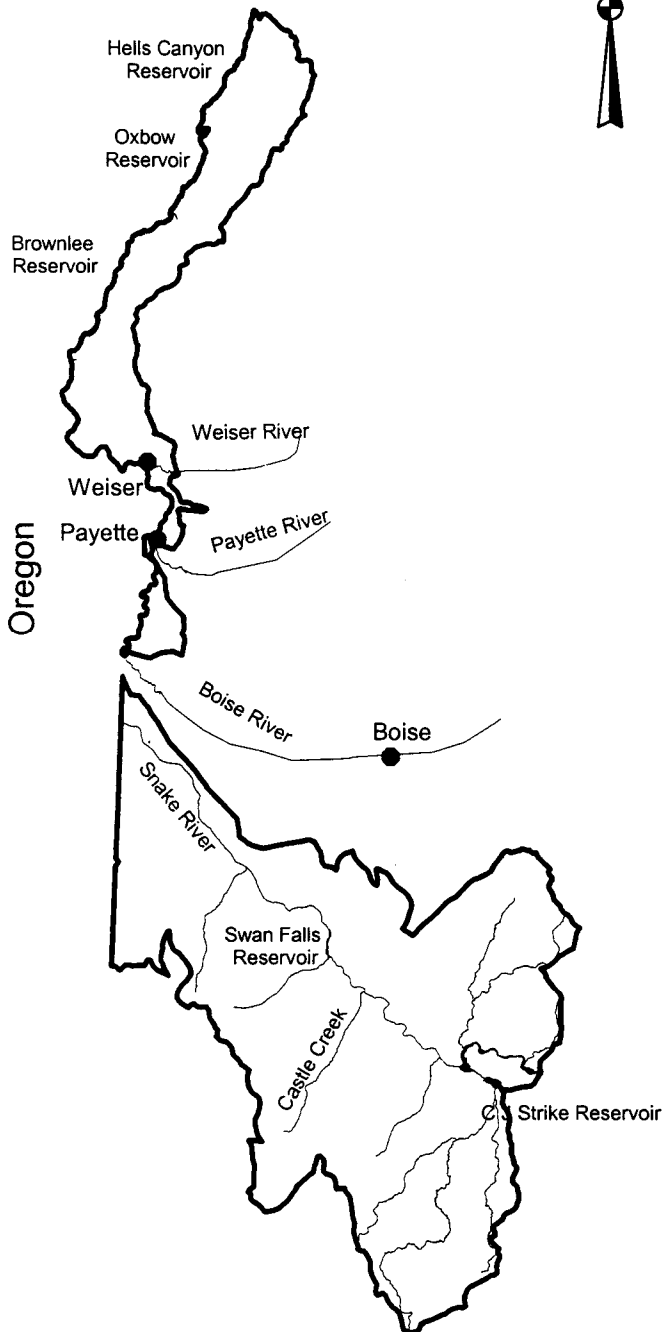


# Snake River Drainage

Hells Canyon Dam  
to C.J. Strike Reservoir



9 0 9 18 Miles

A horizontal scale bar with alternating black and white segments. The segments are labeled 9, 0, 9, and 18, representing distances in miles.

## 17. SNAKE RIVER DRAINAGE FROM HELLS CANYON DAM to C.J. STRIKE RESERVOIR

### A. Overview

The Snake River between Hells Canyon Dam and the backwaters of C.J. Strike Reservoir (265 miles) has been greatly altered by impoundments and diversions. Within this reach of river, Idaho Power Company has constructed five major dams: Hells Canyon, Oxbow, Brownlee, Swan Falls, and C.J. Strike. These dams impound 111 miles of river with a total of 27,400 surface acres of water. There is 154 miles of flowing water remaining within this reach. The Snake River impoundments between Hells Canyon Dam and the State Highway 51 bridge support populations of warmwater and coldwater game fish.

Major tributaries to the Snake River between Hells Canyon Dam and C.J. Strike Reservoir include the Weiser, Payette, Malheur, Boise, Owyhee, and Bruneau rivers. The Malheur is entirely in Oregon and will not be discussed in this plan. The other major tributaries are covered separately in this plan under the major headings of Weiser River Drainage, Payette River Drainage, Boise River Drainage, Owyhee River Drainage, and Bruneau River Drainage.

Minor or small tributaries to the Snake River within this planning section flow from the Seven Devil Mountains, Cuddy Mountains, Hitt Mountains, and the Owyhee Mountains. Streams draining the semi-arid Owyhee Mountains flow through deep, rugged canyons; many flow intermittent during the warm summer months. The remaining small tributaries drain high elevation, mountainous terrain. Most small tributaries to the Snake River and impoundments, which are capable of supporting fish, contain native redband trout (interior rainbow trout). The headwaters of some of these streams also support bull trout. These species will be given management priority to protect wild stocks from overharvest and habitat degradation.

From Brownlee Reservoir upstream to Walters Ferry, the Snake River flows through a broad, flat plain with low gradient, few rapids or riffles, and many large islands. This section of river supports a diversity of warmwater species, including smallmouth bass, channel catfish, largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, pumpkinseed, sunfish, and flathead catfish. From Walters Ferry upstream to Swan Falls Dam, the Snake River flows through a narrow canyon with boulderstrewn rapids and large, deep pools. The primary fishery upstream from Walters Ferry consists of smallmouth bass, channel catfish, and white sturgeon.

### B. Objectives and Programs

1. Objective: Provide a diversity of smallmouth bass fishing experiences within the river and mainstem impoundments.

Program: Evaluate regulation alternatives and public support for special regulations that would increase catch rates for larger size classes of bass in Brownlee and/or Hells Canyon reservoirs, in addition to Oxbow Reservoir.

Program: Assess current growth and condition of smallmouth bass.

2. Objective: Enhance fisheries for largemouth bass in reservoirs by increasing largemouth bass habitats.

Program: Continue an artificial reef habitat in C.J. Strike Reservoir in cooperation with Idaho Power Company and Idaho State B.A.S.S. Federation.

3. Objective: Increase abundance of sturgeon.

Program: Monitor catch rates and conduct mark, recapture, and population estimate studies to determine abundance of sturgeon.

Program: Sturgeon populations may be supplemented with native stocks where necessary to maintain future management options, to research survival rates, or to utilize suitable rearing habitat where natural recruitment does not occur.

4. Objective: Increase angler awareness of the white sturgeon's unique biology and life history. Emphasize proper fishing techniques and tackle, so anglers can minimize mortality when fishing for sturgeon.

Program: Revamp the out of print brochure on white sturgeon and distribute.

Program: Develop a video on sport fishing white sturgeon in Idaho. The videos emphasis will be on proper tackle and technique with a substantial amount of biology and life history and conservation information included. Video will be distributed to sporting goods retailers and fishing clubs in the Snake River drainage. Video will be useful at Regional offices and sporting events.

Program: Create an angler friendly technical "road show" designed for computer video projection that Regional fishery staff can present to interested groups. This would be more intensive in information about the biology and life history and population status of the Snake River white sturgeon stocks.

5. Objective: Protect native bull trout and redband trout populations in the Snake River tributaries.

Program: Further define distribution and abundance of tributary populations of bull trout and redband trout.

Program: Offer appropriate and accurate responses to proposed land management activities of private, state and federal entities.

Drainage: SNAKE RIVER - HELLS CANYON DAM TO C.J. STRIKE RESERVOIR					
Water	Miles/acre	Fishery			Management Direction
		Type	Species Present	Management	
Hells Canyon Reservoir	26/2500	Mixed/ Anadromous	Steelhead	Anadromous	Maintain limited fishery with hatchery steelhead when adult fish are available.
			Rainbow trout Smallmouth bass Largemouth bass Channel catfish Bluegill Crappie Yellow perch Bullhead Kokanee	General	Continue trout stocking when available for tailrace fishery. Maintain catch rates for warmwater fish at a minimum of 1.0 fish/hour.
			Sturgeon	Conservation	Cooperate with the Nez Perce Tribe to evaluate the methods and desirability of providing a limited no harvest fishery on hatchery-origin sturgeon. Sturgeon populations may be supplemented only with native stocks.
Oxbow Reservoir	12/1150	Mixed	Smallmouth bass Largemouth bass	Quality	Maintain and evaluate quality bass regulations.
			Rainbow trout Bluegill Crappie Yellow perch Channel catfish	General	Continue trout stocking when available to provide a tailrace fishery. Maintain catch rates for warmwater fish at a minimum of 1.0 fish/hour.  Maintain involvement with F.E.R.C. relicensing process.
			Sturgeon	Conservation	Cooperate with the Nez Perce Tribe to evaluate the methods and desirability of providing a limited no harvest fishery on hatchery-origin sturgeon. Sturgeon populations may be supplemented only with native stocks.
Tributaries including Wildhorse River and Indian Creek	110/	Coldwater	Rainbow trout Redband trout	Wild	Bull trout and redband subspecies of rainbow trout will receive management priority to prevent overharvest and habitat degradation.
			Bull trout	Conservation	Closed to harvest.
			Brook trout		

Brownlee Reservoir	55/15,000	Mixed	Smallmouth bass Largemouth bass Bluegill Black crappie White crappie Yellow perch Bullhead Rainbow trout Channel catfish Flathead catfish  Sturgeon	General          Conservation	Investigate turbine losses of game fish. Seek to minimize losses. Document current bass and catfish growth and condition. Monitor crappie and other panfish populations. Seek to maintain strong year classes of panfish. Maintain involvement with F.E.R.C. relicensing process.
Snake River from Brownlee Reservoir to Swan Falls Dam	121/	Mixed	Largemouth bass Smallmouth bass Channel catfish Flathead catfish Bluegill White crappie Black crappie Bullhead Yellow perch Pumpkinseed Rainbow trout Mountain whitefish  Sturgeon	General          Conservation	Document current bass and catfish population size, growth, and condition.          Assess population size structure of sturgeon.
Reynolds Creek	25/	Coldwater	Rainbow trout	General	Improve production of native redband trout by seeking improved range and riparian management through BLM planning process.
Swan Falls Reservoir	/900	Mixed	Largemouth bass Smallmouth bass Bullhead Yellow perch Bluegill Channel catfish Rainbow trout White Crappie Black Crappie Pumpkinseed Mountain whitefish Flathead catfish Sturgeon	General          Conservation	Determine fish population species composition and size structure. Monitor sturgeon population status  Maintain involvement with F.E.R.C. relicensing process.



Cove Arm Reservoir	/76	Mixed	Largemouth bass Bluegill Pumpkinseed Black crappie Bullhead Channel catfish	General	Investigate opportunity to enhance warmwater fish habitat.  Discontinue stocking rainbow trout.
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